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## DYNAMITE AS A FACTOR IN CIVILIZATION.

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ATTEMPTS to subvert existing institutions by violence have been sufficiently frequent in the past to afford some basis for judging as to their course and issue; and the use in our time of the new and mighty enginery of destruction which modern science has furnished is not new in its spirit, or aim, or probable results. The sources of the danger which now threatens are not new, and are not in the dynamite itself. It is not in the weapon, but in the hands which use it; and not in these, but in the hearts which direct them that the real peril is to be found. The choices of men are the root of the whole trouble; and its future bearings will only be seen in the motives hereafter most likely to prevail in human purposes.

It is quite clear at the outset—human nature remaining as it is—that political problems are not likely to be solved by force and fear alone. This can be said without any loss of the potency which these agencies undoubtedly exercise. There is a sphere of human life in which force reigns as manifestly as in any department of nature. A man feels pain and fears it—a feeling and a fear not lessened, but rather increased, by increasing intelligence. The superior intelligence which gives a man more skill to shun danger makes him also more keenly sensitive to

VOL. CXXXVII.—NO. 320.

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54089

its presence. A man takes precautions against perils which give an animal no concern. A civilized man apprehends dangers which the savage never sees. Hence the application of force and the apprehension of danger are not likely to lose their influence on human conduct in the coming civilization.

When, however, force is employed there is resistance. Force meets force. Its use by a government to put down opposition, or by an opposition to overthrow a government, meets a counter-acting force in an issue which can only be decided by the greater. But when the greater force has triumphed, it is not thereby dominant. "Force and right," says Joubert, "rule all things in the world; force before right arrives"; but right has already arrived when men have come. It is ever present, and with an authority which does not come from fear. It springs from a source altogether different from hope, or fear, or pleasure, or pain. Its original place, from which no force can drive it, is a throne. It directs human conduct by authoritative precept and not by a craving—a distinction as broad as exists between the heavens and the earth. Whatever individual men may say or do, however often and darkly wrong may take the place of right in the conduct of men, mankind is wiser than any man; and in all human speech, in institutions and laws, in the procedure of courts and of governments, and even in the instincts of what Homer\* calls the homelessness and lawlessness of savage life, there is never wanting the witness of this supreme presence, which rules in all states, and claims ascendancy in all souls, and which, in some way, does contrive to get the mastery over force and fear.

We may, therefore, safely anticipate that what has been in this respect will continue to be. The future does not threaten the race with a continued reign of violence and terror. That principle of authority in every soul, which is, says Richard Hooker,† "laid up in the bosom of God," which commands, says Cicero,‡ "what ought to be done," which declares, says Demosthenes,|| "what is just and honorable," and whose utterances, says Sophocles,§ "are not of to-day, nor of yesterday, and no man can tell when they came," is able to secure the supremacy it claims. It may make force and fear its ministers,

\* *Iliad* IX., 63.

† "Ecclesiastical Polity," I., iii., 1.

‡ "De Legibus," i., 6.

|| "Orat. 1, cont., Aristog."

§ "Antigone," 456.

but will never take them as its masters. These, therefore, can exercise no permanent constraint or terror as instruments of evil. It is only when the right rules them that they are able to rule, in which case their rule need not be dreaded. When force and fear are used unrighteously, be it by an unrighteous government or an unrighteous opposition to government, their agents are sure to incur the doom of their victims.

Again, we may confidently anticipate that, whatever governments may be overthrown in the future, government itself will not cease. Neither universal anarchy, nor universal license for the individual is a future probability. Individuals may destroy themselves, but society will not commit suicide. Men are connected together in the organic interdependence of the state, not because they need each other's protection, or desire the pleasure of one another's presence, or have chosen the obligation of mutual agreement and fellowship, but because they are men only as they are members of society; they are born into the state as they are born into their manhood, and they can no more dis sever themselves from those obligations to one another of which civil government is only the embodiment and the expression, than they can break away from human nature itself.

Advancing civilization neither weakens the power nor diminishes the necessity of civil government. It rather increases these. The civilized man has more government than the savage. Indeed, it is the lawlessness of the savage which makes him a savage, and civilization is truly, as the word implies literally, the reign of the state. Government is needed not merely because men are unwilling to be governed. The need is quite as much in the ignorance of men. In the most highly enlightened community, human actions become so complex, human relations are interwoven in such unnumbered combinations, that confusion becomes inextricable without government. Let one note the infinite complications which arise, and the adjustments which become necessary from the introduction of any one of the great inventions or institutions which our modern life employs,—*e. g.*, the steam-engine, telegraphy, banking,—if he would see the constant need of governmental guidance to secure justice and preserve order and peace. The attempted application of anarchical theories, therefore, to the civilized world will find itself hindered quite as much by a popular instinct as by governmental resistance.

Still further, it is quite clear that the well-being of society is not to be gained through an adjustment of conflicting interests. Here is the frequent mistake of both the statesman and the political economist, who look upon human society as an aggregation of individuals each of whom is to be guarded in his rights against the aggression of another. Self-interest is supposed to be the mainspring of human action, and good order is thought to be secured when men can be made to see that it is for their interest to live in peace with one another. Political science deems itself to have accomplished its task when it has shown how all social disturbances and disorders spring from ignorance of the real interests of men, and how perfect harmony can be maintained by exact adjustments.

Judged by the strictly scientific method, this is very well. It is logical. But the difficulty, when we come to apply it, is that men are not logical. In the practical conduct of life they are governed by their sentiments, and not by their understandings. And when we look closely into the sentiment from which springs every social disturbance, we find it, at bottom, to be this very self-interest, which we now seek to elevate into a source of peace. It is only because men seek their own and not another's good that there is any social ill; and while it may be quite true that their seeking has been in mistaken ways, and that they in reality have only wronged themselves in their methods of gaining their supposed rights, not only cannot they be led to avoid their mistakes merely by having these revealed to them, but the self-seeking sentiment, which is the sole source of evil, cannot, by any increasing knowledge,—by any keener sense or shrewder judgment,—become a fountain of good. Honesty is, doubtless, the best policy, but no policy ever yet made an honest man. In like manner men, doubtless, in the long run, maintain their own interests best by carefully maintaining also the interests of others, but it is a very narrow reading of history, and a very superficial acquaintance with human nature, which has not seen that from such a motive thus applied no desirable results ever come. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life," said Satan; but men are destroying their lives all the while, and this none the less where the means of saving them are the largest and the most clearly known. "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it," says the Lord; "but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." For my sake!

There is great emphasis here. To lose one's life for one's own sake is a loss without any compensation or refinding, but to lose it for another's sake, for the Lord's sake, brings it back again new born, recreated, self-sacrifice taking the place of self-seeking, and love becoming the true life. An acquaintance with mankind which has not passed beyond the Satanic point of view, does not understand this, but he who has seen what Christ has done in human souls, and has profoundly studied the changes which his life has actually wrought in the organization of society, while he may well despair of light from any other source, will find the social problem perfectly solved in the Christian principle. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." If every man were truly Christ's disciple, all bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ, society would be consciously knit together in a true interdependence,—the interdependence of an organism, wherein each part is at the same time the means and the end of all the rest,—and crime, and vice, and wrong of every sort would cease. The Son of God is the true Son of Man, and when the kingdoms of this world shall truly have become his kingdom, when he shall have become enthroned in all institutions, and laws, and movements of men, man must have then gained his true perfection, violence then can no more be heard, and wasting and destruction must disappear.

Now, the disturbances of our time constrain us, by their very dreadfulness, to look for the foundation stones of human progress. We can move in entire fearlessness when the ground does not shake; but when it is quivering beneath, and gaping all about us, we must note well where our steppings are. The first effect upon our civilization to be expected from the dire procedures which have lately excited the world is the startled vision which must behold its danger. It sees because it cannot turn away its eyes.

Our age is often called a superficial age, an age of frivolity and shams, but I confess it seems to me far otherwise. There is frivolity enough indeed, and shams enough now apparent; but it would take me long to find an age with a keener eye, or with more depth of feeling, or a greater earnestness of action than the age which has fought victoriously the battle with the slave-power in America, which has not only witnessed but secured the emancipation of the serfs in Russia, which has achieved the

triumphs of German and Italian unity, which has despoiled the Papacy of its temporal power, which has secured the British Empire in India, which has introduced so prominently the principle of arbitration in the settlement of national disputes, which has wrought such surpassing deeds of missionary enlightenment in India, in Madagascar, and the South Seas, and whose wonders of science and industry and invention have been paralleled in no age. The nineteenth century is not purblind. It has good eyes. It has a good heart also, and will not suffer itself to be hoodwinked. It is, therefore, likely to see its true defense as well as its peril. It knows better than to seek to quell its fears by force alone, and will surely learn—is beginning already to learn\*—that its labor-saving inventions are not of themselves going to lighten the burden of labor; that its social science can give neither the impulse nor the ground for social progress; that its increase of wealth, its industry, its intelligence, instead of being instruments of defense, may all be turned into deadly weapons of destruction; that self-interest does not secure self-preservation; and that in the principle of self-forgetfulness, wherein each one pleases not himself but his neighbor, even as Christ pleased not himself, is the only true means of social safety and strength and growth.

It would be a very narrow intellect which should think lightly of those triumphs of invention or achievements of science which form so prominent a characteristic of the present age; but it would be a very short-sighted vision which should not see the inaptitude of these to secure social perfection. The penetrating thought will reach to the full requirements of the case; and the nineteenth century, not lacking in penetration, will see that it can only be saved, and will only be satisfied, by becoming more Christlike.

These positions do not rest upon the optimistic persuasion that there is in human nature an inherent tendency to a progressive improvement, for such a persuasion cannot be justified by facts. When we look at history comprehensively, no such tendency appears. Viewed simply in respect of extent of territory or numbers embraced, deterioration shows more prominently in the actual history of the world than progress. Arts and litera-

\* "It is questionable," says John Stuart Mill, "if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being."—*"Polit. Econ.,"* B. 10; ch. 6.

tures and civilizations and religions have decayed far oftener than they have manifested an increasing growth.

Taking the facts as they are, without prejudging them by any theory, human nature shows a singular aptitude to slip away from its vantage-grounds, as though it was far more powerfully controlled by a proclivity to a lower state, than by an impulse to a higher one. This aptitude is just as evident to-day as ever. No one can look carefully at our present civilization without noting signs of evil which in other civilizations have been portents of ruin. But, in the words of the sagacious Niebuhr, "as the consideration of nature shows an inherent intelligence which may also be conceived as coherent with nature, so does history, on a hundred occasions, show an intelligence which is distinct from nature, which conducts and determines those things which may seem to us accidental; and it is not true that the study of history weakens the belief in a Divine Providence. History is, of all kinds of knowledge, the one which tends most decidedly to this belief." There is thus another factor than human agency, entering into the product of human history. The historical evidence alone, closely scrutinized, shows what can only be denominated a divine superintendence. The historical movement is a movement with a divine purpose, of whose meaning we get glimpses, with increasing clearness from increasing study of the actual procedure. The incarnation of the Son of God is the focal point to which all lines preceding it converge, and from which radiate the most potent influences in the subsequent history of the world. These influences are still mighty. They are an exhaustless source of power. They show themselves guided by unerring wisdom. We need not therefore anticipate from them either a mistake or a failure. They preach to us courage, even while human endeavors, left to themselves, are as likely as ever to end in disaster.

JULIUS H. SEELYE.